

# Modified checklist with follow-up valid for autism in toddlers

August 22 2016

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(HealthDay)—The Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M-

CHAT) with Follow-up Interview (M-CHAT/F), which can be administered by minimally trained primary care physicians (PCPs) is valid and reliable, according to a study published online Aug. 19 in *Pediatrics*.

Raymond Sturmer, M.D., from the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore, and colleagues examined the feasibility, validity, and reliability of the M-CHAT/F by PCPs with online prompts at the time of a positive M-CHAT screen. A total of 197 M-CHAT/Fs triggered by positive M-CHAT screens were completed by 47 PCPs from 22 clinics via the same secure web-based platform that parents used to complete M-CHATs before an 18- or 24-month well-child visit. A second M-CHAT/F was administered by trained research assistants (RA). As criterion measures, the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule, Second Edition, and the Mullen Scales of Early Learning were administered; measures of agreement were compared between PCPs and RAs.

The researchers observed 86.6 percent agreement between PCPs and RAs (Cohen's  $\kappa$ , 0.72). Significant equivalence was seen for all measures in comparison of sensitivity, specificity, positive predictive value (PPV), and overall accuracy for M-CHAT/F between PCPs and RAs. There was significant improvement in PPV for use of the M-CHAT/F by PCPs versus M-CHAT alone.

"Minimally trained PCPs can administer the M-CHAT/F reliably and efficiently during regular well-child visits, increasing PPV without compromising detection," the authors write.

Several authors disclosed financial ties to Total Child Health.

**More information:** [Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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